

organic creation. By certain original arrangements these destructive oscillations are prevented. So long as the bodies continue to revolve, their orbits will not be much different from what they now are. And this result is not affected by the action of the resisting medium. Such a medium cannot increase the small eccentricities of the orbits. The range of the periodical oscillations of heat and cold will not be extended by the mechanical effect of the medium, nor would be, even if its density were incomparably greater than it is. The resisting medium therefore does not at all counteract that which is most important in the provision for the permanency of the solar system. If the stability of the system had not been secured by the adjustments which we described in a former chapter, the course of the seasons might have been disturbed to an injurious or even destructive extent in the course of a few centuries, or even within the limits of one generation; by the effect of the resisting medium, the order of nature remains unchanged for a period, compared with which the known duration of the human race is insignificant.

But, it may be objected, the effect of the medium must be ultimately to affect the duration of the earth's revolution round the sun, and thus to derange those adaptations which depend on the length of the year. And, without question, if we permit ourselves to look forward to that inconceivably distant period at which the effect of the medium will become sensible, this must be allowed to be true, as has been already stated. Millions, and probably millions of millions, of years express inadequately the distance of time at which this cause would produce a serious effect. That the machine of the universe is so constructed that it may answer its purposes for such a period, is surely sufficient proof of the skill of its workmanship, and of the reality of its purpose: and those persons, probably, who are best convinced that it is the work of a wise and good Creator, will be least disposed to